by way of substantial lease charges. Therefore efforts are being made to keep Market Borrowings at a minimum level.

Apart from efforts to increase the level of Budgetary Support and reduce the Market Borrowings, concerted efforts are being made to supplement resources through funding from State Governments and public private partnerships.

Peddapally-Sanga Reddy Rail Line

1161. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the detailed circumstances and reasons under which rail line was laid from Telapur to Patancheru only, instead of extending it line up to Sanga Reddy, Medak, Siddipet and Peddapally;

(b) whether the rail line from Telapur to Patancheru is functioning; and

(c) if not, reasons therefor in laying this line?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Telapur-Patancheru line was laid to meet the needs of the industries located at Patancheru as well as for the movement of workers engaged in the various industries in the area and to meet their goods transport requirements.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The section was opened for passenger traffic *w.e.f.* 2.4.1993 but due to poor patronization, train services were totally suspended *w.e.f.* 30.9.1994.

Criteria of Halt Stations

†1162. PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY: Willl the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the criteria for constructing a halt station between two railway stations;

(b) whether it is related with the population of surrounding villages and the distance between two stations; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) to (c) A halt station can be opened if the proposal is financially justified, feasible both from operating and engineering points of view and the site of the proposed halt, in non-suburban

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

areas, the inter-distance is at least 5 kms from the stations/halts on either side. While calculating financial justification, the population of the surrounding villages is also taken into consideration.

The halt can also be opened even if it infringes the minimum distance limitation of 5 kms from the stations/halts on either side, if it is found to be remunerative and there is need for this on passenger amenity grounds. Even in case of loss, a halt can be sanctioned if the loss is less than Rs. 10,000 per annum;

When the conditions stipulated above are not fulfilled, a halt may be opened on passenger amenity ground after approval from the competent authority.

Demands of NFIR for Rail Travellers

1163. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Federation of Indian Railwaymen (NFIR) has demanded steps to improve safety and for quality services to the travelling public;

(b) if so, the details of their demands; and

(c) the steps taken for early reconditioning of distressed bridges and make available the required staff, for maintenance and operation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The National Federation of Indian Railwaymen (NFIR) held the 23rd National Convention at Visakhapatnam from 19th to 21st August, 2002, wherein, *inter-alia,* they traced out various factors like inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor quality of equipment and materials, poor maintenance and unsatisfactory working conditions of staff belonging to safety categories etc. and suggested corrective steps needed to remove these shortcomings, so that there is an improvement in safety and quality of services to the travelling public.

(c) All the distressed bridges on Indian Railways are sanctioned for rehabilitation/rebuilding on priority. Out of 527 distressed bridges, as on 1.4.2002, 341 are targeted to be rehabilitated during 2002-2003. An amount of Rs. 410 crores was spent for rebuilding/strengthening of 3400 bridges including 617 distressed bridges during the 9th Plan Period. Rs. 1530 crores has been earmarked for rehabilitation/rebuilding of bridges out of Special Railway Safety Fund in the next 5 to 6 years. In addition, bridges are also sanctioned for